

M. 325,451
S. 386,117

SEP 21 1965

Senator Demands CIA 'Watchdog,' Charges Bungling

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New York Herald Tribune Wire

WASHINGTON — The Senate Monday heard new charges of alleged "bungling" by the Central Intelligence Agency and a plea for establishment of a joint congressional watchdog committee for CIA.

The attack on the intelligence agency as voiced on the Senate floor by Sen. Stephen M. Young (D., Ohio) who said the time was "long past due" for Congress to establish its authority over the intelligence agency.

However, prospects were dim that Congress will establish any such watchdog panel. Similar proposals have always been defeated since the CIA was born 18 years ago in 1947.

Young's speech appeared to have been touched off by the disclosure earlier this month that Secretary of State Dean Rusk had apologized in 1961 over a CIA operation in Singapore that ended in failure and the arrest of the American agent involved. Young called the episode "disgraceful."

"In addition to its mistakes in Southeast Asia," he said, "everyone is aware of the damage to our prestige caused by CIA bungling of the U2 incident of five years ago and of the disastrous role CIA operatives played in the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion."

The CIA has "in effect been making foreign policy," he said. "The CIA has gradually taken on the character of an invisible government, answerable only to itself."

Congress last seriously considered a joint committee to watch over the CIA in 1956. At that time, a bill introduced by Sen. Mike Mansfield (D., Mont.) now the Senate majority leader, was defeated 59-27.

Defenders of the intelligence agency argue that existing, shadowy subcommittees of the House and Senate Armed Services and Appropriations committees already oversee CIA on an informal basis. Proponents of the watchdog panel would like to see a formal joint committee with a professional staff, much like the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy.

But powerful congressional leaders, such as Sen. Richard B. Russell, (D., Ga.) who heads the Senate Armed Services Committee and its CIA subgroup, have traditionally opposed a joint watchdog committee. They argue that it would lead to exposure of security secrets. The CIA takes the same position.

Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson also have resisted a watchdog group, preferring to have CIA's activities reviewed by a civilian advisory panel named by the chief executive. The panel, the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, is currently headed by Washington attorney Clark Clifford.

Young said he believes CIA is "overstaffed" but can't prove it because of lack of accountability of the agency to Congress. "This agency does not account to anyone for the expenditure of millions of dollars," he said. "Undoubtedly some CIA agents have been corrupted along with attempting to corrupt officials of other governments."

CIA's budget is secret, but the agency is believed to spend upwards of \$1 billion a year, and has more than 13,000 employees. Its headquarters is at Langley, Va. across the Potomac from the capital. It is headed by Retired Vice Admiral William F. Raborn, who succeeded John A. McCone in April.

The Singapore episode referred to by Young came to light earlier in the month when Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, of Singapore, said a CIA agent had been arrested in 1960 for trying to buy secrets from an intelligence official of the then crown colony. Lee said he demanded \$33 million in U.S. aid to hush up the arrest, but alleged the was offered only \$3 million and turned it down as an "insult."

The State Department first denied the prime minister's story. But when Lee pulled out Rusk's 1961 letter the State Department conceded that the secretary had "expressed regret over this incident."

A week after the Singapore incident broke, the CIA figured in the news again when Gen. Elias Wessin y Wessin, Dominican strongman, charged that a CIA man he identified as David Phillips had offered him \$50,000 for his \$18,000 home if he would leave the Dominican Republic. Wessin left the island a few days later, charging that he did so with an American "bayonet" at his back.